



# HOT SHEET

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## Annual Refresher Training

by Bob Rebarchik

*1999  
Spring*

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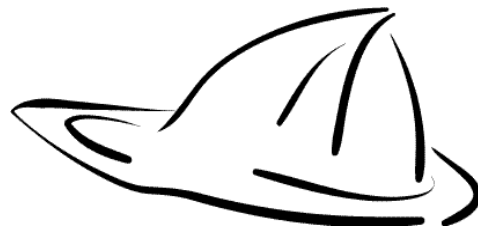


Dust off the cobwebs and wash off the smoke it's time for the annual refresher training. All firefighters that will be participating in fire suppression or prescribed fire duties are required to receive annual safety refresher training. The Fireline Safety Refresher package put together by the Alaska Fire Service along with the new Look outs, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES) workshop are excellent tools to use for the refresher training.

Refresher training for Emergency Fire Fighters (EFF) will be conducted in conjunction with pack testing. Newly trained firefighters will get the training with the basic package. Each agency is offering annual refresher courses so please contact your agency fire personnel for information about course locations and times.

The annual refresher training must include at a minimum, training in the ten (10) Standard Fire Orders; the 18 Watch Out Situations; Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES); and hands-on fire shelter inspection and deployment practice. It is recommended that refresher training include the Common Denominators to Tragedy Fires, Principles for Downhill Line Con-

struction, Urban-Wildland Firefighter Safety, Snag Safety, and discussion reviews of local entrapments, near entrapments, and deployment findings from safety research efforts such as the "Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study."



The U.S. Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service require the refresher training to be a minimum of eight hours for their employees. There is not a specified minimum time requirement for the refresher training for any other agency at this time. The refresher will normally take between three and six hours to complete.

Be a proactive participant in the refresher training you attend. Remember, your refresher training is what you make it. Have a safe fire season!

## Message From the Chair

It is with great pleasure that I take on the duties and responsibilities of the chair of your safety committee. It is a job that I can't do alone. I have the support of a dedicated committee, but need input from the field. Are we meeting your needs? What safety items would you like to see addressed? Feel free to contact any committee member with your ideas and concerns. We are after all, "Your safety committee."

This spring I visited the firefighter memorial in Boise. What a solemn reminder that we, as firefighters, are indeed the greatest resource on the fireline to be protected. As we approach our 1999 fire season, I urge all firefighters and fire managers help make this a great season with SAFETY first and foremost on our minds.



## LCES Workshop

The loss of life on wildland fires is a tragic event which affects all facets of the fire community. It is an aspect of firefighting which is often discussed as potentially occurring due to unsafe actions or situations present on all fire assignments. The prevention of serious injury or death is the primary concern of all firefighters and their organizations. To this end, the requirement of a yearly Fireline Safety Refresher course has been implemented for all operational personnel. This is an effective method of reminding firefighters of the Standard Firefighting Orders (SFFO), the Situations That Shout Watchout, lessons learned, and the proper use of fire shelters.

In an effort to keep this information fresh and engaging, a new tool has been added to the training toolbox. This is course called the LCES Workshop. It is not designed to replace Standards for Survival, Fireline Safety refresher, or mandatory fire shelter training; it is a supplemental course that can be used in alternate years, or concurrently to enhance safety awareness. This course uses instructor and student participation to focus on the 10 Standard Fire Fighting Orders in relation to LCES criteria and develop performance standards for fire situations.

In order to qualify instructors, a "handoff" workshop was scheduled for the 1999 training season. There were two sessions held. For more information see the Alaska Interagency Training Bulletin or call AFS training (907) 356-5663.

I urge anyone interested in becoming a future instructor or any one with the responsibility for fireline safety to contact the committee for more information.

## The Safety Committee

**Rob Allen**  
BLM/Alaska Fire Service  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska  
99703  
(907) 356-5538 wk  
(907) 356-5078 fax  
(AK Fire Service) at large

**Darin Anderson**  
Alaska DNR Fairbanks  
3700 Airport Way  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 451-2618 wk  
(907) 451-2633 fax  
anderson@PTIAAlaska.net  
(AK DOF) at large

**Pete Buenau**  
Alaska DNR Fairbanks  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska  
99703  
(907) 356-5850 wk  
(907) 356-5855 fax  
peteb@dnr.state.ak.us  
State of Alaska (DOF)

**Scott Billing**  
BLM/Alaska Fire Service  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska  
99703  
(907) 356-5500 wk  
(907) 356-5517 fax  
scott\_billing@ak.blm.gov  
AWFCG Liaison

**Steve Heppner**  
U.S. Forest Service  
Old Dairy Road  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
(907) 790-7477 wk  
(907) 586-8795 fax  
Heppner\_Steve/  
r10@fs.fed.us  
USDA Forest Service

**David Jandt**  
BLM/Alaska Fire Service  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska  
99703  
(907) 356-5503 wk  
(907) 356-5560 fax  
dave\_jandt@ak.blm.gov  
Bureau of Land  
Management (AFS)

**Gene Long**  
Chugachmuit  
4201 Tudor Center Drive,  
Suite 120  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
(907) 562-4155 wk  
(907) 563-2891 fax  
forest@chugachmuit.com  
Chugachmiut (BIA)

**Vince Mazzier**  
BLM/Alaska Fire Service  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska  
99703  
(907) 356-5663 wk  
(907) 356-5290 fax  
vince\_mazzier@ak.blm.gov  
Type I Team Safety Officer

**Jan Passek**  
National Park Service—  
Denali National Park  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, Alaska 99755  
(907) 683-9548 wk  
(907) 683-9639 fax  
Jan\_passek@nps.gov  
National Park Service

**Bob Rebarchik**  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service  
P.O. Box 287  
Galena, Alaska 99741  
(907) 656-1231 wk  
(907) 656-1708 fax  
bob\_rebarchik@mail.fws.gov  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service



## FIRE ORDER ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEB

“Initiate all action based on current and expected fire behavior”

“Recognize current weather conditions and obtain forecast”  
**www.fire.ak.blm.gov** is just one of many sites available with valuable information that is updated daily for firefighters and fire managers.

**Reports:** check out the current situation for Alaska and for the nation. Read the synopsis pick up clues on number of new fires, resistance to control, etc.

**Maps:** Current lightening activity, fire danger maps, drought condition maps, and fire behavior forecasts.

**Weather:** Morning and afternoon fire weather forecast for the state, plus links to RAWS stations and National Weather Service satellite imageries.

A second site with similar links is the State of Alaska home page **www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/fireinfor.htm**. The links on weather give you current conditions across Alaska.

Pass the word back to us, if you have some good fire web sites to share.

## Fire Shelter Update

**Current Fire Shelters:** Should be plentiful for the coming 1999 season. A new Tech Tip from the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) will be addressing a modification that will enable the user to pull the fire shelter out of its case more easily. Once the tech tip is received, National Interagency Support Caches will begin to incorporate this modification into the existing fire shelters

**New Fire Shelter Design:** The existing fire shelter design has been modified to incorporate a couple of new features for the 2000 season. There will be flaps attached to the sides that can be pulled under the shelter to provide a split floor, which is designed to provide additional protection. There is also expected to be a modification to the corners of the fire shelter that will enable the user to hold on more securely. This new shelter will be available from GSA for the 2000 fire season.



Alaska Firefighters' Safety and Health Committee  
P.O. Box 35005  
Ft. Wainwright, Alaska 99703-0005

## **SAFETY NOT COMPROMISED**

### **A message from the State Forester**

This year I have a concern, and all firefighters should be aware of this situation as it affects safety. Alaska suppression organizations will be entering the 1999 fire season with a number of vacant positions due to budget shortfalls. Vacant positions may mean that certain functions simply won't be accomplished. On the other hand, the most important missions such as initial attack cannot be compromised. In many cases the people used to make up the shortage will be Emergency Fire Fighters (EFF). Emergency Fire Fighters are key ingredients to fire management efforts in Alaska. Managers and supervisors must assure the EFF are only placed in positions that they are trained for, and qualified to fill. The bottom line is that firefighter safety has been and will always be our number one priority.

The key to maintaining a safe operation is to maintain a balanced and effective organization. Organizations with suppression responsibilities recognize the fact that safety is one issue that cannot be compromised in times of reduced budgets. Each employee tries to do the best they can to accomplish the mission even though the resources available may have been reduced. Successful, safe operations should not lull management or employees into a false sense of security.

Safety must be continually emphasized in the fire program through tailgate sessions, the All Eyes Aviation Safety Program, prevention, and training. Safety is everyone's responsibility, so please make 1999 a safe year for firefighters.